

## Appendix E

# Event Organizer Packet

Thank you for your interest in doing an **I Pledge to Graduate** event at your school! This packet will help you plan your school's event.

### Here's what's in your packet:

1. Steps to launching an *I Pledge to Graduate* event in your school
2. Sample event planning tool
3. Graduation Matters Montana press release example

### Questions? Great ideas? Contact us!

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Phone: (406) 444-5643 Fax: (406) 444-2893

Mailing address:

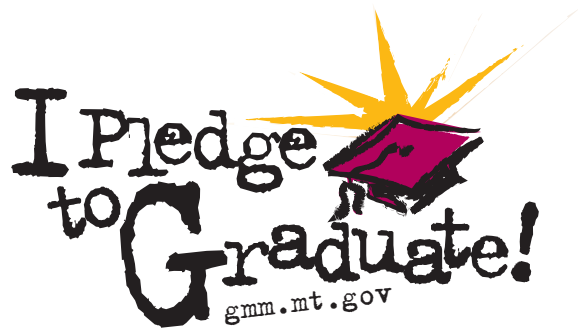
Graduation Matters Montana  
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### Find us online!

Website: <http://graduationmatters.mt.gov>

Twitter: GradMattersMT

Facebook: Graduation Matters Montana



*This toolkit uses information from DoSomething.org and the Global Youth Service Day Toolkit*



## 4 steps to launching an I Pledge to Graduate event

### Prepare and Plan

#### 1. Build a team (3-5 members) or ask an existing school group (Student Council, Business Professionals Association, etc.) to work with you

- A successful team will include students as co-leaders, at least one school staff member and a community member.
- Identify responsibilities for each member (see planning tool).

#### ☐ Set your goal for target

- Contact Andy Boehm, OPI Dropout Data Coordinator, at 444-0375, [aboehm@mt.gov](mailto:aboehm@mt.gov), to obtain this information.
- Commit to 100% of your targeted student population signing the pledge.
- Groups to consider: freshmen class, all high school students, seventh or eighth graders, elementary students

#### ☐ Determine event details

- Event ideas: pep-rally or assembly, pizza party, at end of freshmen orientation, table in cafeteria, at an Open House or sporting event, Spirit Week

#### ☐ Get permission and confirm space for event

#### ☐ Identify incentives for students

- Seek donations from local businesses: free coffee with pledge card, gift certificates, free night of bowling, iTunes cards, T-shirts, food discounts and more.
- Use incentives to encourage ongoing pledge activities: weekly drawings, prizes at graduation, new business discounts, etc.
- Each student who makes the pledge will be entered into OPI's incentives drawing (gift cards and iPods awarded each month).

#### ☐ Order pledge cards and signage from OPI

- Contact Thea Whalen at 444-5643 or [twhalen@mt.gov](mailto:twhalen@mt.gov) to order Pledge cards, wristbands and signage for your event.

#### ☐ Get local "celebrity" involvement

- Graduation Matters Missoula invited the city mayor to participate. He sent a letter to every incoming freshman asking each student to commit to graduating from high school.
- Some local "celebrities" you might invite to join your initiative: elected official, tribal elders, local musician, athlete or artist, high school alumni or someone who overcame odds to graduate.

☐ **Publicize event with fliers, press release, social media and media outreach**

- Issue press releases, invite media to your event and continue to update them.
- Make sure someone is ready to answer questions and media requests.

**Day of event coordination****2. Set up and prepare for student attendance**

- Have supplies on hand: pencils, scissors, and signage
- ☐
- Have students sign pledge cards and then give them a wristband**
- 
- ☐
- Collect cards from students**
- Students take the small cut-off card to use for incentives and to remind them of their pledge to graduate.
- ☐
- Tally number of pledges received**
- 
- ☐
- After event, send signed cards to the OPI**
- Send to OPI, Attn: Thea Whalen, PO Box 202501, Helena, MT 59620.
  - The OPI will then create certificates for each student and mail them to the school; students will also be entered into a monthly drawing for an iPod Touch or gas cards.

**Celebrate and Recognize****3. Share number of pledges made with school and community**

- Use social media, school newspapers and press releases to local media to share the number of students who took the pledge.
- ☐
- Announce incentive winners**
- 
- ☐
- Volunteer Appreciation**
- 
- ☐
- Distribute Pledge Certificates**
- Distribute in homeroom or have a school-wide assembly.

**Next Steps**

- ☐
- Identify ways to continue support for students to reach goal of graduating**



## Sample I Pledge to Graduate event planning tool

Use this planning tool to make sure you think through all the details.

Task	Volunteer	Start Date	Deadline	Completed (Y/N)
<b>I Pledge Coordinator</b>				
Identify 3-5 team members including one school staff member and students as co-leaders				
Hold a meeting with everyone interested in helping to plan the event to share the goals and discuss ideas				
Create a master timeline for all tasks needed to carry out the event to use it to monitor the team's progress				
<b>Volunteer Management</b>				
Create a list of volunteer tasks or roles for the event				
Determine how many volunteers are needed & begin to recruit!				
<b>Materials &amp; Supplies</b>				
Create a list of supplies and materials needed to complete the project				
Draft letter to businesses to solicit incentive prizes and discounts				
Order pledge cards and wristbands from OPI				
<b>Event details</b>				
Identify where you want the event to occur; confirm space				
Designate someone to coordinate speakers/presentations				
Talk to your school about engaging a local public official or celebrity				
<b>Public Relations, Outreach, &amp; Media</b>				
Talk to your school office about inviting the press to your event				
Identify someone to take photographs (Remember to create a photo release form if your school hasn't already)				
<b>Celebrate &amp; Reflect</b>				
Bring everyone together afterwards to celebrate and identify what will improve the event for next time!				
Send all event materials, media and success stories to OPI; OPI will send Pledge certificates to the school				

**SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY**

Contacts: CCDHS Principal, Jamie Ogolin, (406) 234-4920  
GMMC Steering Committee Chair Traci Duffin, (406) 234-4920  
Allyson Hagen, OPI, 406-444-3160

**Students Aim to Break World Records at Graduation Matters Miles City Launch**

Miles City, MT – While thousands arrive in Miles City for the famous Miles City Bucking Horse Sale, students at Custer County High School will be working to gain attention for breaking a Guinness World Record as a school at the launch of Graduation Matters Miles City.

“Graduation Matters is going to be fun and hopefully effective for students. I can’t wait for the record breaking!” said Beth Sutter, sophomore at CCDHS.

Custer County High School received a Graduation Matters Challenge Fund grant for \$8,600 from the Office of Public Instruction to launch a community-based effort to increase their graduation rate and ensure students graduate prepared for college and careers. The Office of Public Instruction was awarded \$450,000 over three years from the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation to support community-based Graduation Matters initiatives.

“As we embark on our pursuit of raising our graduation rate, we want to have a spectacular assembly that celebrates our successes and launches our new initiative. The tie-in between breaking Guinness records and graduation is that if we can break world records, we can graduate more students,” explained Traci Duffin, Graduation Matters Miles City Steering Committee Chair.

Custer County High School has set a goal to improve its graduation rate from 77% in the 2010-2011 school year to 90% for the graduating class of 2014. Graduation Matters Miles City is going to use its Challenge Fund grant to build school and community partnerships, launch an after-school tutoring program to raise achievement and avoid credit deficiencies, improve internship and job exploration opportunities and support middle school to high school transitions through a new Freshman Orientation program.

- WHO:** Students, school leaders, community leaders, and OPI Deputy Superintendent Dennis Parman (more than 600 participants)
- WHAT:** Students will fill out “I pledge to graduate” cards in their morning classes and be entered to win prizes. The Graduation Matters Miles City launch will begin with dancing and speakers, then students will attempt to break a Guinness World record for the largest thumb war. Additionally, students will attempt to break eight individual Guinness World Records. The launch will conclude with a barbeque lunch donated by the Miles City Wal-Mart and Blue Rock Distributing.
- WHERE:** CCDHS gym, 20 South Center, Miles City
- WHEN:** 10:15 AM – 12:35 PM

